

Q: Isn't replacing GF money with SF the same as supplanting?

A: Supplement not supplant does not apply to the SF.

Q: So is it correct then that we will be responsible for additional reporting requirements and assurance compliance while at the same time not receiving any of the stabilization funds?

A: The K-12 community and OPI will be responsible for making progress on the assurances but not reporting on the use of the SF if none of it flows to K-12 districts as it currently appears. For the state to receive a Race to the Top Grant, we will have to show our progress on the assurances as well. If Montana receives one of those grants, there will be reporting required on its use and 50% of those funds go to districts based on the Title I formula.

Q: When will this power point be put on the website?

A: The PowerPoint is posted on the OPI Web site under Recovery Act News Conference Materials Assurances Slideshow.

Q: Has the legislature removed all general fund money for higher ed or just a portion?

A: House Bill 645

An Act Implementing the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009

The following table shows the proposed allocation of the \$121.6 million that is allocated for education from the state fiscal stabilization fund.

Description	Agency	Total Funds FY 2010 & 2011
Maintain Support for Higher Education	OCHE	\$ 89,150,476
Tuition Mitigation for Resident Students	OCHE	\$ 10,000,000
Distance Learning & Integrated Enrollment	OCHE	\$ 2,000,000
Community College Funding	OCHE	\$ 1,277,775
Tribal Assistance Funding	OCHE	\$ 900,000
Long-Range Building Program Capital Projects	MUS Campuses	\$ 18,300,000
Total		\$121,628,251

All of the state fiscal stabilization funds are allocated to Higher Education in Montana. The first \$89.2 million is a funding switch that substitutes state fiscal stabilization funds for a like amount of general fund dollars. The next \$14.5 million is an increase in funding for higher education. The funds are to be used for tuition mitigation at the MUS educational units and the state's community colleges and for distance learning. The last \$18.3 million is for deferred maintenance and energy conservation improvement projects.

Q: Did I hear you state that at the present time all \$121,628,250 in stabilization funds are slated to go to higher ed?

A: See the answer of the previous question.

Q: I joined late but is there a timeline for the assurance, for example the online testing?

A: We currently have no timeline for online testing. Instead, we are continuing to gather information and engage in partnerships that will assist us in determining the process, the stages, and the feasibility.

Q: What is your estimated timeline to comply with the requirements of Assurance #3 in regard to the Teacher ID System? Does this have to be finished or just in process when you receive the SFSF application in March?

A: No work has yet begun on this requirement of the America COMPETES Act. The baseline data needed to receive the first 67% of the SF is being taken from an existing report. We do not know how much progress will be required to receive the other 33% or to receive a Race to the Top grant.

Q: When is the state of Montana going to adopt a statewide curriculum? The current CRT is based on a set of standards that are far too general in nature? Also, we need much more support on item analysis from Measured Progress.

A: I know of no plans to adopt a statewide curriculum. The secure online reporting system provided by Measured Progress, MARS (Montana Analysis and Reporting System) has been developed through input from Montana educators. We continue to invite and welcome suggestions.

Q: How firm is it that all of the stabilization money will go to higher education? It appears that most of the assurances for receiving the money apply to K-12.

A: That is how HB645 currently has the SF being used, all in higher education. It is true that K-12 is responsible for most of the assurances, however. But K-12 must also make progress on the assurances in order to receive a Race to the Top grant.

Q: It seems that there is a lot of work to be done at the state level both in regard to standards and assessment. This will take some time. Don't we have a limited amount of time to spend this money? How will this all come together in a timely fashion in a way that actually allows us to access the funds?

A: The reforms that are called for in the assurances are not necessarily limited to the time these funds will be available, and the funds don't really pay for the work needed to fulfill the assurances. However, for the state to receive a Race to the Top grant, some progress on the assurances will need to be made within the next six to 12 months. Those grants will be awarded in two rounds, one in Fall 2009 and another in Spring 2010.

Q: Has OPI looked at NWEA as a vendor for online testing?

A: NWEA is the Northwest Evaluation Association. Several schools in Montana use the NWEA MAPS, an online test. NWEA would be notified of any Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for online testing. NWEA staff regularly attends and exhibit at the annual state assessment conference. They have much experience in online testing. We have and will continue to learn much from NWEA.